

Fresno Co. worker, wife charged in scheme

Posted at 09:41 PM on Monday, Sep. 12, 2011

By Pablo Lopez/The Fresno Bee

A former Fresno County welfare eligibility worker and his wife have been charged in connection with an alleged scheme to supply food stamps to ineligible applicants, including Fresno State football players.

Michael Martin, 51, will be arraigned today in Fresno County Superior Court.

His wife, Dawn Griffin, 44, was arrested Monday afternoon. She was being held in the Fresno County Jail in lieu of \$420,000 bail, the jail's website showed.

The criminal complaint against the couple does not identify any athletes, but Fresno State officials have said that punitive actions have been taken against a number of student athletes who received benefits from the alleged welfare fraud. The university has not identified the athletes.

Martin, who was hired by the county in May 2000, was arrested last month by the Fresno County District Attorney's Office after the county's Department of Social Services requested an investigation.

The complaint accuses Martin of eight felony counts, including embezzlement, identity theft, and possession of heroin and being under the influence of the drug. Martin, who was released from jail because of overcrowding, no longer is employed as a county eligibility worker.

His wife faces 22 felony charges, including perjury, identity theft, burglary and receiving stolen property.

Stacy Cordero, a senior investigator for the District Attorney's Office, outlined in court documents the case against the couple. According to Cordero's affidavit:

Griffin completed her own application for public assistance, but failed to disclose she married Martin in Las Vegas in 2003. Martin processed his wife's application even though department policy says eligibility workers are not allowed to process documentation pertaining to friends, family members or cohabitants.

Investigators also accuse Griffin of using food stamps that Martin allegedly issued in the name of a prison inmate.

The inmate told investigators that he doesn't know Martin or Griffin and that he never gave them permission to open a food stamp case in his name.